

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original): A process for producing R-2-(4-hydroxyphenoxy)propanoic acid or a salt thereof by reaction of hydroquinone or a salt thereof with a S-2-halopropanoic acid or a salt thereof in the presence of a mild reducing agent wherein the mild reducing agent is a neutral or a charged low oxidation state sulphur species, such as sulphur dioxide, a sulphite, a bisulphite, a hydrosulphite, a metabisulphite, a sulphenic acid, a sulphinic acid, for example formamidine sulphinic acid, or a low oxidation state phosphorous species such as a phosphite or hypophosphite, or hydrazine, a hydrazine derivative, or ascorbic acid.
2. (Original): A process according to claim 1 wherein the S-2-halopropanoic acid is S-2-chloropropanoic acid.
3. (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~ wherein the excess hydroquinone is recovered for recycle.
4. (Currently Amended): A process according to ~~any preceding claim~~ claim 1 wherein the mild reducing agent is a neutral or a charged low oxidation state sulphur species, a low oxidation state phosphorous species, hydrazine, a hydrazine derivative or ascorbic acid.
5. (Original): A process according to claim 4 wherein the mild reducing agent is sulphur dioxide, a sulphite, a bisulphite, a hydrosulphite, a metabisulphite, a sulphenic acid, a sulphinic acid, a phosphite, hypophosphite, hydrazine, a hydrazine derivative or ascorbic acid.
6. (Original): A process according to claim 5 wherein the mild reducing agent is an alkali metal sulphite or bisulphite.
7. (Original): A process for the manufacture of quizalofop-P-ethyl, haloxyfop-P-methyl, fluazifop-P-butyl, clodinafop, cyhalofop-butyl or fenoxaprop-P-ethyl

by a) producing R-2-(4-hydroxyphenoxy)propanoic acid by reaction of hydroquinone or a salt thereof with S-2-halopropanoic acid or a salt thereof, in the presence of a mild reducing agent, b) reacting the R-2-(4-hydroxyphenoxy)propanoic acid with the appropriate halo-aryl or halo-heteroaryl moiety to give a R-2-((4-aryloxy or heteroaryloxy)phenoxy)propanoic acid and c) esterification of the acid from step b) to give quizalofop-P-ethyl, haloxyfop-P-methyl, fluazifop-P-butyl, clodinafop, cyhalofop-butyl or fenoxaprop-P-ethyl.